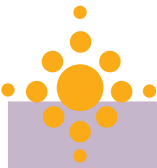




4000 Moorpark Ave.
Suite 200
San Jose, CA 95117
408.260.3700
www.first5kids.org

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Message from Executive Director, Jolene Smith



Quoting from the well-known children's book, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll writes, "What is the use of a book, without pictures or conversations?" As we focus our fall edition of *Take 5* on reading and early literacy, we must not leave out the importance of "telling stories."

Telling stories is a part of life, intrinsic to most cultures. Sharing stories helps preserve culture and is a wonderful way to develop a child's oral language skills while building relationships.

Storytelling and the sharing of life's experiences through conversation is very close to my heart. My grandfather,

in my opinion, was one the greatest of the great storytellers. He was unable to read or write in English, so his life experiences and the experiences of my ancestors were told to me through his stories and our rich conversations. My early childhood development, especially my oral language development, as well as my close relationship to my grandfather were greatly enhanced and influenced by his stories and shared life experiences. He was one of my mentors, his stories were pivotal in developing my foundation for life long learning. I am eternally grateful to him for that experience.

We all need to continually remind ourselves of the importance of playing, singing, talking and reading to children. Storytelling and conversation is a wonderful way of adding to the foundation of relationship development, while creating opportunities and experiences for children to become life-long learners. Let's not forget how important those experiences are for all of us!

Jolene Smith

Take5

QUARTERLY NEWSMAGAZINE
Fall 2009 – Issue 05



Reading Together

by Diane Frankenstein, *Educational Consultant*

Everyone likes stories, but not everyone loves to read. A child's desire to learn to read comes from being read to. Reading to a child ignites their imagination and creates a love of story. Every child deserves the advantage of being a good reader and turning children into lifetime readers calls for teamwork on the part of all the adults in the life of a child—family, caregivers, teachers, and librarians.

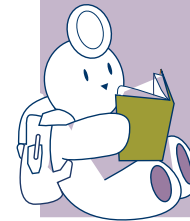
Early on in my career, I, as an educational consultant, believed that the key to turning children into readers was simply to put the right book in the right hands at the right time and, *bingo*, children would love the stories they read. I quickly realized that something was missing and that children also need to talk about the books they read. There is no magic formula to raising a child who loves to read, but there is a winning equation: *Read a book. Ask a question. Start a conversation.*

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Touchpoints brings Parenting Model to FIRST 5



Inspired by Dr. T. Berry Brazelton's visit to Santa Clara County Systems' leaders, FIRST 5 Santa Clara County spearheaded the implementation of the The Brazelton Touchpoints Approach™ for the Family Wellness Court for Infants and Toddlers. Dr. Brazelton is a leading pediatrician and founder of the Touchpoints model.

Touchpoints are the predictable times and events in a child's development at which a child's behavior seems to fall apart. These "touchpoints" are points of change for the child and parent (*see chart on page 3*). The Brazelton Touchpoints Approach™ values parents as the "expert" and credits them to trust their own experiences, knowledge, and instincts in forming relationships with their children.

...continued on page 3

Reading Together

...continued from page 1

Teachers are trained to teach a child how to read. Adults have the opportunity to show that child how to love reading by helping him or her find great stories, and then through questions, encouraging conversations. Here are a few suggestions on how to help children love what they read:

- + Don't waste precious time trying to convince your child of the importance of reading; just read them good stories.
- + Read aloud. A child's desire to learn to read comes from being read to.
- + Help your child find their "home-run" books – books that tap into their curiosity and interests, stories where they care about the characters and what happens to them.
- + Choose books that are appropriate in terms of reading level ability and emotional readiness for the story. Children want stories they can understand.
- + Talk with your child about the story—children who talk about stories better understand the stories they read.
- + Slow down. Encourage your child to read fewer books and know them well.
- + Audio books (not the abridged stories) are terrific. Listening to books on tape is not cheating!

Reading with children and talking with them about the books they read is a fun way to spend time together. Talking with children about the stories they read (conversational reading) helps them engage and connect with a story. Children who talk about stories better understand what they read. Let there be no doubt: children who get more from the books they read are children who love to read.

Vocabulary is the lynchpin to literacy and talking with children about the story, the pictures and their reaction to the book is where they acquire the vocabulary they need to become good readers. A child who enters school with a vocabulary of 20,000 words has a distinct advantage over the child who enters school with a vocabulary of 2,000 words. Conversations are where children first learn many of the skills they need to learn to read.

The book recommendations in *Reading Together: Everything You Need to Know to Raise a Child Who Loves to Read* offer stories on subjects that are important to children. The conversations that these books jump-start allow children to better understand what they read. The purpose is to make talking about a story a habit—talk is essential and the more meaningful and substantive the better.

Conversation starters for any story:

- + Tell the story just by looking at the pictures.
- + Which character are you most curious about?
- + Which character would you want to be your friend?
- + If you could invite one character to dinner, who would it be?
- + What would you do in this situation?
- + What are you curious about at the end of the story?

Nobody comes into the world knowing how to talk about a story. Most children thrive on questions; it's as if they breathe out question marks as they try the world on for size.

Finding meaning in a story calls for guessing, pondering, and speculation; it's less about what you know and more about what you think. At heart, conversational reading is making comments and asking questions—it is talking with children about the stories they read. A good conversation is not about the answers, it is about the questions and good questions take you

someplace in your thinking. Children learn more by looking for the answer to a question and not finding it, than they do from learning the answer itself.

Some tips on conversational reading:

- + One good question can begin a conversation: "What do you notice?" and "What do you think?"
- + Try listening. After asking a question, wait and allow a child time to think and respond.
- + "What if" is a powerful tool to get an imagination working.
- + Follow Winnie the Pooh's advice on conversation: "It is more fun to talk

with someone who doesn't use long, difficult words but rather short, easy words like "What about lunch?"

Through books, children learn language—oral and written—and through language, they learn to think. The most important outcome may not just be how many books children have read, but how many conversations they've had about them. In our fast-moving, media saturated world, thoughtful conversations are more important than ever before.

For more information, please visit www.dianefrankenstein.com

Reading Together



101 Books Kids Will Want to Read and Talk About

“Here's a look inside Reading Together ...”

Hunter's Best Friend at School

Laura Malone Elliott



World of Ideas
Clowning around, doing the right thing, friendship, mischief, peer pressure, setting a good example



Story Synopsis

Hunter and Stripe are best friends, and Stripe comes to school one day in a mischief-making mood. Stripe entices Hunter to go along with his clowning around, even though Hunter is not sure he should. Hunter has to figure out a way to get his best friend to be his best self.

Who, What, When, and Why

- ★ Stripe comes to school in a mischief-making mood. What does he do to make mischief? Do you ever like to clown around? Who in your class likes to clown around?
- ★ Why does Hunter follow Stripe's urges to cut up his paper frog? How does he feel after he cuts up his paper frog?
- ★ What does Mr. Ringtail say to Hunter after he cuts up his frog? What could he have said?
- ★ Hunter's mom says you don't have to go along with your best friend. What else does she say about what it means to be a best friend?
- ★ What does Hunter do to help Stripe be his best self?



READ TOGETHER: GRADES PRE-K-2
READ ALONE: GRADES 1-3

Souvenir

"Being a best friend doesn't mean always following along. Sometimes being a best friend means you have to help your friend be his best self."

Look Closer

- ☆ What makes Hunter like Stripe? Is Stripe a bad friend for Hunter?
- ☆ Who is your best friend? Do you always go along with what he or she says? Do you like your best friend to go along with what you say or do?
- ☆ Do you worry that your friends might not like you if you don't go along with their suggestions? Is it hard not to go along with your friends, especially when it looks like fun?
- ☆ Are you more like Hunter or Stripe? Or a little bit of both?

What I Noticed

I never thought that helping someone be his best self was part of friendship.

What did you notice?

Quotes

"Actions speak louder than words."
—AMERICAN PROVERB

Next

- Check out these other titles:
- A Bargain for Frances*
BY RUSSELL HOBAN
 - Cardboard Piano*
BY LYNNE RAE PERKINS
 - Erin*
BY MARGARET SHANNON
 - Ira and Walter*
BY ELISSA HADEN GUEST
 - Miss Bindergarten Has a Wild Day in Kindergarten*
BY JOSEPH SLATE
 - Timothy's Tales from Hilltop School*
BY ROSEMARY WELLS

